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BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

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ANALYSIS BRANCH

FROM : Amembassy, GUATEMALA

DATE: 17 SEP 71

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY: Monthly Report of Incidents, August 1971

REVIEWED BY Coy DATE _____
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

SUMMARY: As reported in the press, probable politically-motivated violence, although still high in relation to what it was last year before the imposition of the state of siege in November, was down 28% from the extraordinarily high average of the past five months. There were 97 incidents this month including 51 killings. The activity of the far Left terrorists was decidedly down, possibly due to the actions of the Administration's tough counter-insurgency campaign during the Siege. However, two Communist/terrorist operations received wide press coverage: the August 3 kidnapping of Roberto ALEJOS Arzu and the August 13 assassinations of two National Police Detectives. Press-reported actions were reduced on most other fronts as well. The Government initiated few attacks on the far-Left terrorists, violence dropped in the provinces (except El Páten), and there were fewer court actions this month. END SUMMARY

Statistics

Newspapers in August covered 97 incidents of probable politically-motivated violence. This figure is down 28% from the March-July extraordinarily high monthly average (135), but it is still double the monthly average of 1970 prior to the November state of siege declaration (47). The August incident total included 51 deaths. Of the bodies found, four reportedly had signs of torture, 13 were unidentified, 19 were found dumped along highways and in ravines, and seven were discovered decomposed. (These figures are not necessarily mutually exclusive.) In most cases, the occupations of the deceased were not stated. Those few which were included two military commissioners, four policemen, one auxiliary mayor, and one terrorist.

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Activities Attributable to the Far Left

The most spectacular far Left terrorist action this month was the August 3 kidnapping of prominent businessman Roberto ALEJOS. PGT/FAR elements abducted him at a downtown intersection and have successfully managed to keep him in captivity longer than any other well-known individual abducted in the last year. After a delay of several weeks, the kidnappers made contact with his family and via letters, tapes, and newspaper advertisements.

The Government, despite intensive efforts, has no leads.

Two attacks on security forces reported in the press in August appear attributable to the far Left terrorists. [redacted] reported FAR elements ambushed and machinegunned to death Inspector Rudy HURTARTE and one other National Police Detective who were in the vicinity of a cell meeting in Zone 19. In addition, unknown assailants shot and wounded two National Policemen working on a case in Zacapa on August 15, although the press article gave no other details.

Terrorists were involved in other actions as well, although all told, only 10 (10%) of the month's incidents appeared attributable to the far Left terrorists. [redacted] said a San Marcos hanging bridge, reported sabotaged in early August in the press, was destroyed by FAR terrorists to distract security forces and enable FAR leader "Cesar Montes" to infiltrate back into Guatemala. The far Left terrorists may have been behind the deaths of two finqueros and several assaults against farms, all on the South Coast. At the end of the month, the GOG arrested and publicly charged three National Policemen with delivering weaponry captured by the police to one Manuel ORELLANA whom the Government identified as a FAR agent. [redacted] Several days later, Orellana's relatives told the press that he had been detained by unidentified men.

The only press reports of Communist propaganda involved subversive signs in Tiquisate (Escuintla Department).

Publicized Government Security Force Actions

Security Forces' rescue of kidnapped businessman Victor KAIRE on August 5 received front-page treatment. Following up an impressive piece of investigative work, security forces freed Kaire [redacted] and killed three of his guards. [redacted] Army bulletin reported, however, that a shootout had taken place and that the Frente Revolucionario Unido Nacionalista -3 (FRUN-3) was behind the affair. In any event, Kaire was very grateful to his rescuers.

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In a move rare for those held for ransom, Kaire gave an extensive interview of the episode to the media.

COMMENT: We have no evidence that FRUN-3 is a meaningful organization or is, as some police officials believe, a front for the FAR, PGT, and the MR-13. The three who were killed appeared to be uneducated, common laborers. The security forces successful rescue of a kidnapped victim is an infrequent occurrence in Guatemala. END COMMENT

In addition, several individuals and some armament were reported captured in a massive Army-conducted search August 19 in Zone 19, which sealed off some 20,000 people for the better part of that day. A second large-scale search was conducted several miles northwest of the capital at the site of an alleged terrorist-police encounter, but the Government made no follow-up announcement. An August 16 security force operation in Zone 3, according to the press, uncovered some war materiel, subversive literature and resulted in one arrest.



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firing for which he / subject to stiff military discipline.

COMMENT: The press articles reporting the three capital machinegunnings noted above were brief and point out the difficulty in identifying assailants, motivations, and circumstances.

South Coast

The press reported 33 incidents including 23 deaths on the South Coast. Unidentified armed men killed two finqueros in Escuintla and Quezaltenango Departments, and a San Marcos military commissioner. One Ismael MARTINEZ was reportedly found perforated with .38 and 9mm bullets near Coatepeque (Quezaltenango Department) with FAR propaganda in a pocket. The latter's death occasioned a comment in Grafico that Coatepeque continued to be the site for the deposit of bodies in the West.

Eastern Region

Only 17 incidents appeared in newspapers concerning the eastern region. This is a substantial reduction from the level of recent past months. The Chiquimula Chief of the Military Commissioners and a Zacapa auxiliary mayor, appointed by the MLN head of the municipality, were numbered among the eight killed in the northeast in August.

The Peten

An August 29 article in La Nacion noted that the Peten had become a theater of acts of violence which included threats against officials, the Comixtun sawmill's burning (July 25), kidnappings, and assassinations. The article said that Peten inhabitants generally believed most incidents were the work of common delinquents from outside the area, not guerrillas. The article also said that as a result of the sudden upsurge in violence, military strength in the area had increased and vehicles traveling there were receiving much closer inspection.

COMMENT: The dearth of reporters from capital newspapers in the Peten undoubtedly accounts for the minimal coverage of violence. However, the above article points out a serious outbreak in lawlessness in the Peten which we have confirmed from other sources. At the moment, we do not have information to suggest that guerrilla organizations are behind any large portion of the violence. In any event, we are reliably informed that a large, well-supplied military troop task force now being formed is scheduled to be stationed in the Peten in October.

Court Actions.

Newspaperman Carlos Rafael SOTO Rosales, a FAR terrorist charged with the January assassination of a military policeman, unsuccessfully sought bail at the end of the month. At the same time, the press reported that new witnesses had appeared in the murder trial of three accused of the

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killing earlier this year of Jose Luis COLOM Garcia, half-brother of the capital's mayor.

between mid-November and August 31, there have been 619 requests for court exhibitions of Guatemalans. Of this total, 19 have been reported killed, 53 have appeared and been released, 100 have been shown and kept under detention, and 447 are missing. The number of individuals missing increased by 53 in August. An organization calling itself "the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners" sent a request to President Arana in early August asking for police investigations into cases of dozens of missing relatives.

Other Kidnappings

In all, papers reported 25 abductions with possible political motivations, 14 in which relatives accused the security forces of involvement. In one case, the press reported the disappearance of well-known businessman Walter FISCHER in late August, then noted his reappearance several days later without explanation.

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account in a signed editorial in his newspaper La Hora August 9, demanding that authorities promptly clarify the circumstances. No criticism appeared in the press over the GOG account of the August 24 Batres incident, but many Guatemalans have expressed their disbelief to Embassy officers.

COMMENT: The downturn in press-reported political violence in August suggests in part that the FAR and PGT/FAR are hurting from effective GOG actions and are limiting their operations. In addition, the FAR may be in the process of concentrating on reorganization and a build-up in rural areas. The PGT has suffered from a lack of funds which it hopes to overcome with the ransom obtained from the Alejos kidnapping. There is also indication that security forces are devoting more of their time to combating the high level of common crime in the country, and consequently giving less attention to the insurgents. In any event, the assassination of Detective Hurtarte and the continued captivity of Alejos at month's end aptly indicate that the terrorists maintain a capability to act.

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Enclosure:

Monthly Frequency of Political Incidents by Region.

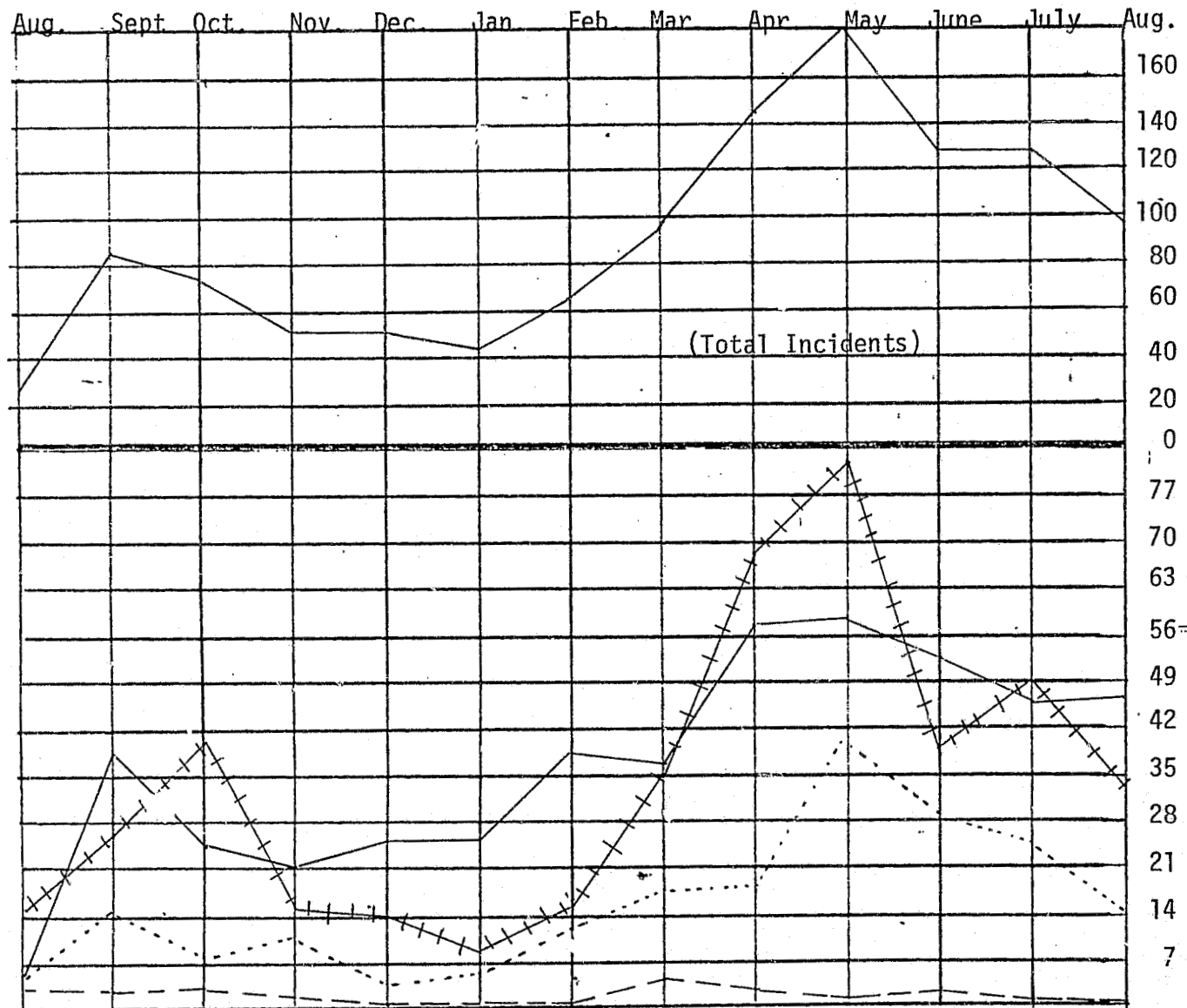
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MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF POLITICAL INCIDENTS BY REGION (1) - AUGUST 1970 - AUGUST 1971



1. For purposes of this graph, acts of violence include shootings, bombings, and deaths.
2. Capital area (—) - Sacatepequez, Guatemala
3. South Coast (+++) - San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla
4. Eastern Region (***) - Jutiapa, El Progreso, Jalapa, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Izabal
5. Highlands (---) - Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz